

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 5561

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PINR, BG

SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION: COL. ABU TAHER

1. NLT.CO . (RET.) ABU TAHER IS WIDELY BELIEVED IN DACCA TO BE LINK BETWEEN THE JSD (NATIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY) AND THE DISAFFECTED SEPOYS AT DACCA CANTONMENT. THE FOLLOWING BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED INDIP CTLY FROM AN ASSOCIATE OF TAHER AT THE DREDGER DIVISION OF THE INLAND WATER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY WHERE HE IS THE DIRECTOR.

2. ABU TAHER WAS A PAKISTANI ARMY OFFICER TRAINED AS A COMMANDO; SUPPOSEDLY HE RECEIVED SOME TRAINING IN THE UNITED STATES. IN JUNE OR JULY 1971, TAHER, THEN A MAJOR, ESCAPED FROM WEST PAKISTAN WITH TWO COLLEAGUES. ONE OF THOSYSCOLLEAGUES IS NOW DEAD, THE OTHER IS CMHONEL MANZOOR OF THE DACCA BRIGFE.

3. DURING THE LIBERATION WAR, TAHER OPERATED ON THE MYMENSINGH MEGHALAYA BORDER; QADER "TIGER"SIDDIQUI WORKED UNDER HIS COMMAND. AT SOME POINT, TAHER STEPPED ON A MINE AND LOST A LEG. WHEN M CTORY CAME IN DECEMBER, TAHER WAS IN A HOSPITAL IN INDIA.

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4. WHEN HE RETURNED TO BANGLADESH, TAHER WAS NAMED FIRST

ADJUTANT GENERAL OF THE ARMY AND LATER PUT IN CHARGE OF THE COMILLA GARRISON. IN EARLY 1974, HOWEVER, E HAD A FALLING OUT OF SOME SORT WITH MUJIB AND WAS FORCED INTO RETIREMENT. APPARENTLY HE WAS NOT IN TOTAL DISGRACE, BECAUSE HE WAS PUT IN CHARGE OF THE SEA TRUCK DIVISION AND THEN THE DREDGER DIVISION.

5. TAHER REPORTEDLY HAS TWO BROTHERS WHO ARE ACTIVE MEMBERS OF JSD AND HAVE BEEN JAILED ON OCCASION. THE SOURCE SAYS THAT AFTER AUGUST 15, TAHER WAS CALLED BY THE MAJORS TO BANGOBHABAN WHERE HE STAYED FOR THREE OR FOUR DAYS. HE THEN LEFT IN DISGUST, CLAIMING THAT THE "SAME OLD THUGS" WERE RUNNING THE COUNTRY AND THAT MOSHTAQUE WAS AS BAD AS MUJIB. TAHER IS SAID TO HAVE COMMENTED THAT MOSHTAQUE'S GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT LAST BEYOND OCTOBER (THIS SOUNDS LIKE HINDSIGHT ON THE SOURCE'S PART).

6. AFTER NOVEMBER 3 TAHER DISAPPEARED. ON THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 7, THE SOURCE SAYS, HE WAS DRAFTING THE RADIO BROADCASTS ANNOUNCING ZIA'S RESTORATION. FROM CANTONMENT SOURCES WE UNDERSTAND THAT TAHER'S PRIVATE RESIDENCE IN NARAYANGANJ IS BEING GUARDED BY ARMY PERSONNEL AS A SECURITY MEASURE FOR TAHER'S FAMILY. TAHER HIMSELF IS AT THE CANTONMENT AND IS SEEN MOST OF THE TIME MOVING ABOUT WITH GENERAL ZIA.

7. COMMENT: IF THERE IS TRUTH IN THE STORIES OF TAHER'S LINK WITH JSD, THEN ONE MUST PRESUME FOR NOW THAT ZIA IS KEEPING AN EYE ON TAHER. ZIA'S ATTACK ON JSD IN HIS SPEECH NOVEMBER 11 WOULD NOT INDICATE THAT TAHER IS ADVISING HIM. BOSTER

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